

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/674,511

Examiner

Kevin D. Williams

Applicant(s)

TAKEDA, MORIHIRO

Art Unit

2854

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

☒ This communication is responsive to the telephone interview of 4/15/2004.

☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-10.

☒ The drawings filed on 01 October 2003 are accepted by the Examiner.

☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:

1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.

☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.

(a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached

1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.

(b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).

☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 10/01/2003

☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material

5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.

7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment

8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance

9. ☐ Other _____.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-10, drawn to a plate supplying apparatus, classified in class 101, subclass 477.
 - II. Claims 11-16, drawn to a plate supplying apparatus, classified in class 101, subclass 479.

2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions Group I and Group II are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention Group I has separate utility such as being used in a plate supplying apparatus that does not raise and lower the plate storage section or the plate suction section for grasping and feeding plates from the storage section. See MPEP § 806.05(d).

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and the search required for Group I is not required for Group II, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

3. During a telephone conversation with Stephen Becker on 4/15/2004 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-10. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action.

Claims 11-16 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Examiner's Amendment

4. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Stephen Becker on 4/15/2004.

5. The application has been amended as follows:

- Claims 11-16 have been canceled.
- Claim 1 has been re-written as follows:

1. A plate supplying apparatus for supplying a plate, which is transferred such that a portion of its faces are reversed, from a pile of plates each alternating with a slip sheet, the apparatus comprising:

the plates each having a first face facing upwards and a second face facing downwards in a storage section;

the storage section for storing the pile of plates each alternating with the slip sheet;

a plate suction section for sucking a proximal end portion of a plate present at the top of the pile of plates stored in the storage section, the proximal end portion being nearer to the plate suction section;

a base member for supporting the plate suction section;

a moving and pivoting mechanism for moving the plate suction section and the base member in a direction toward a portion of the plate opposite to the proximal end portion, while causing at least the plate suction section to pivot, thereby causing the plate sucked by the plate suction section to be transferred to a state in which at least a portion of the first and second faces are reversed so that said first face of said portion faces downwards and said second face of said portion faces upwards;

a vertical movement mechanism for causing the plate suction section to move linearly with respect to the base member for removing a slip sheet from the plate sucked by the plate suction section;

a control section for controlling movement of each of the plate suction section, the moving and pivoting mechanism, and the vertical movement mechanism; and

a supplying section for supplying the plate transferred by the moving and pivoting mechanism toward another equipment device,

wherein the control section controls the plate suction section so as to suck the plate, and then controls the vertical movement mechanism so as to cause the plate suction section to move linearly with respect to the base member, thereby performing a separating operation for shaking off a slip sheet adhering to a back face of the plate, and thereafter the control section controls the moving and pivoting mechanism so as to

transfer toward the supplying section the plate on which the separating operation has been performed by the vertical movement mechanism.

- Claim 10 has been re-written as follows:

10. A plate supplying apparatus for supplying a plate, which is transferred such that a portion of its faces are reversed, from a pile of plates, the apparatus comprising:

the plates each having a first face facing upwards and a second face facing downwards in a storage section;

the storage section for storing the pile of plates;

a plate suction section for sucking a proximal end portion of a plate present at the top of the pile of plates stored in the storage section, the proximal end portion being nearer to the plate suction section;

a base member for supporting the plate suction section;

a moving and pivoting mechanism for moving the plate suction section and the base member in a direction toward a portion of the plate opposite to the proximal end portion, while causing at least the plate suction section to pivot, thereby causing the plate sucked by the plate suction section to be transferred to a state in which at least a portion of the first and second faces are reversed so that said first face of said portion faces downwards and said second face of said portion faces upwards;

a vertical movement mechanism for causing the plate suction section to move linearly with respect to the base member for removing another plate from the plate sucked by the plate suction section;

a control section for controlling movement of each of the plate suction section, the moving and pivoting mechanism, and the vertical movement mechanism; and

a supplying section for supplying the plate transferred by the moving and pivoting mechanism toward another equipment device,

wherein the control section controls the plate suction section so as to suck the plate, and then controls the vertical movement mechanism so as to cause the plate suction section to move linearly with respect to the base member, thereby performing a separating operation for shaking off another plate adhering to a back face of the plate sucked by the plate suction section, and thereafter the control section controls the moving and pivoting mechanism so as to transfer toward the supplying section the plate on which the separating operation has been performed by the vertical movement mechanism.

6. The above changes have been made in order to patentably distinguish claims 1 and 10 above the prior art of record.

7. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The primary reason for the allowance of claim 1 is the limitation of a vertical movement mechanism for causing the plate suction section to move linearly with respect to the base member for removing a slip sheet from the plate sucked by the plate suction section, and a control section for controlling the vertical movement mechanism so as to cause the plate suction section to move linearly with respect to the base member thereby performing a separating operation for shaking off a slip sheet adhering to a back face of the plate, in combination with the other claimed structure.

The primary reason for the allowance of claim 10 is the limitation of a vertical movement mechanism for causing the plate suction section to move linearly with respect to the base member for removing another plate from the plate sucked by the plate suction device, and a control section for controlling the vertical movement mechanism so as to cause the plate suction section to move linearly with respect to the base member thereby performing a separating operation for shaking off another plate adhering to a back face of the plate sucked by the plate suction section, in combination with the other claimed structure.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

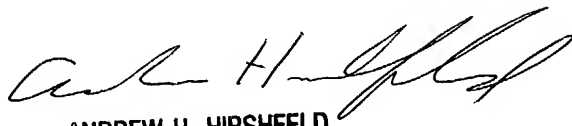
8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kevin D. Williams whose telephone number is (571) 272-2172. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 6:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew H. Hirshfeld can be reached on (571) 272-2168. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

KDW
April 16, 2004



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